

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

April 11, 2006

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, April 11, 2006 at 10:10 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

Present Thomas Owen, Rabbi Elan Adler, Roberto Allen, Sambhu Banik and JoAnn Fisher.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT Commissioners received copies of the Chairperson's Report (See attached). Chairperson Owen apologized for not being here last month.

New Commissioner Chairperson Owen introduced and welcomed the new Commissioner, Rabbi Elan Adler. Chairperson Owen requested that Commissioners and agency staff introduce themselves for the benefit of Commissioner Rabbi Adler.

The Deputy Director welcomed Commissioner Rabbi Adler on behalf of the Executive Director.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES Chairperson Owen stated that on page 3, line 4 of the minutes, \$15,00 should be \$15,000. The minutes of the March meeting were accepted with the above-mentioned change.

Lee Hoshall's Passing Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that Lee Hoshall, an attorney with the agency for about twenty years, passed yesterday morning. Chairperson Owen stated that Mr. Hoshall was very dedicated and an intense person in doing his job.

The Deputy Director stated that Mr. Hoshall was an excellent attorney and was very serious about the mission of this agency. MCHR is not aware of the arrangements yet; when we receive them we will email them to Commissioners. The General Counsel also spoke of Mr. Hoshall's devotion to the work of the Commission and his passion for the law and for fairness.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT Commissioners received copies of the Executive Director's Report (See attached).

**DEPUTY
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT**
Case Processing

Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). A couple of months ago EEOC implemented a new data system. MCHR is still in the process of cleaning up and correcting the data base.

**ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT**

The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that the agency's Monthly Budget Status Report was not available at this point, due to the system not closing prior to holding the monthly Commission meeting.

MCHR is in the last quarter of the state's fiscal year and cruising toward closing. At this point MCHR does not anticipate any problems closing in the black.

The State Legislative Auditors are conducting their three year audit of the agency's fiscal operations. The auditors may be here for about two months. MCHR will keep Commissioners informed on the audit progress.

**GENERAL
COUNSEL'S
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's Report (See attached). The General Counsel informed Commissioners that on Friday the other attorney, Pat Wood, lost her father. The General Counsel stated that Mr. Hoshall was a very committed person to the mandate of the Commission. Mr. Hoshall was an excellent attorney and very bright. The General Counsel thanked Mr. Hoshall for his contributions and commitment to this agency.

Equal Pay Commission

The General Counsel informed Commissioners that the Equal Pay Commission's Interim Report was completed and submitted on time. This report is a result of the Task Force appointed by the Governor to look at equal pay as it applied to gender, as well as to minorities in Maryland. This report is not public; therefore, the General Counsel does not have a copy to share with Commissioners. When the report becomes public Commissioners will receive a copy. This report was sent to the Governor and the General Assembly and entails what the Equal Pay Commission has done thus far and what its plans are for the future.

Senate Bill 897
House Bill 1486 –
Commerical Non-
Discrimination Policy

The General Counsel informed Commissioners that this bill amended the procurement statute and its intent is to establish a policy that the State of Maryland would not accept or enter into contracts with businesses or vendors who discriminate. In addressing this policy there was a scheme created in which a complaint process was established and a procedure on how the complaints were to be handled, what the remedies were supposed to be, what the due process is and what the various steps are that had to be taken to investigate and litigate these cases. Initially the agency that was going to be responsible for carrying out this scheme was the Attorney General's Office. In the ninth hour a switch was made to substitute the Commission for the Attorney General's Office. There are things in the bill that should be in the regulations;

there are things in the bill that make it difficult for enforcement. This is an unfriendly mandate; it is asking us to do something that we do not have staff to do.

This bill is the outcome of the Minority Business Task Force that Lt. Governor Steele was in charge of. The Task Force recommended that certain legislation come out in terms of dealing with businesses that discriminate and their ability to procure contracts with the State. The bill passed both the House and the Senate.

The Attorney General's Office previously submitted a fiscal note requesting additional staff and money. They requested two attorneys, two investigators and support staff in order to take the complaints and then have these complaints litigated. The sponsors of the bill stated that the bill can be fixed with regulations and cleaned up next year. This bill passed and the Commission expressed our concerns with the Governor's office.

Once the bill is signed the General Counsel will begin reviewing the final bill and will schedule a meeting with the sponsors.

Washington Region for
Justice and Inclusion's
Media Day

The General Counsel attended the Washington Region for Justice and Inclusion's Media Day. Their topic was immigration, which was chosen by the committee last year, prior to the interest of the immigration issue.

OLD BUSINESS
Immigration Study

Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that there will be a meeting of the committee the week after next. Chairperson Owen gave an update on the progress of the study.

Commissioner Allen would like to participate in the Immigration Study Committee. Commissioner Allen's participation was welcomed by Chairperson Owen

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Banik invited Chairperson Owen to attend the Montgomery County Human Rights Commission meeting. Chairperson Owen accepted the invitation with thanks. The Montgomery County Commission meets the last Monday of each month, between 6:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Montgomery County
Human Rights Hall of
Fame

Commissioner Banik also informed Commissioners that he attended the Montgomery County Human Rights Hall of Fame event.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

Barbara Wilson